



Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

Watershed Management Division
1 National Life Drive, Main 2
Montpelier VT 05620-3522
<http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed>

Agency of Natural Resources

[phone] 802-490-6177
[fax] 802-828-1544

Myra Price
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, 4502T
Washington, DC 20460

June 23, 2016

Dear Ms. Price,

I am writing to express the Vermont Wetland Program's strong support of the Association of State Wetland Managers' (ASWM) Wetland Program Grant proposal entitled, **"Healthy Wetlands, Healthy Watersheds: Leveraging state wetland restoration and protection programs to improve watershed health."**

This proposed project responds directly to a growing need in our state and across the nation for the development of a collaborative framework to encourage integration of wetland programs into broader watershed, water quality, land use, conservation, natural hazard and transportation programs.

Our ability to integrate wetland protection and restoration into other program areas is limited by a number of factors. Where within the Vermont Watershed Management Division staff understand the general importance of healthy wetlands equaling healthy rivers and lakes, it is still difficult to quantify. In an age of performance measures and need to have numerical stormwater offsets it is difficult to clearly express the value of one wetland in the watershed. Access to technical information regarding ways in which the benefits of wetland ecosystem functions can help us meet diverse program goals, develop robust climate adaptation strategies, and better advocate for wetland integration in important state initiatives such as the Lake Champlain TMDL.

We see ASWM as uniquely positioned to do this work because of their connection with states and water organizations, and ability to clearly distribute results of their studies.

We plan to collaborate with ASWM in this project by sharing our water quality integration story, which is quickly evolving into an interesting comprehensive watershed monitoring approach.

We strongly endorse this proposal and hope that EPA will designate funding to make this project happen.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Lapierre", written in a cursive style.

Laura Lapierre, VT Wetlands Program Manager
(802) 490-6177
Laura.lapierre@vermont.gov